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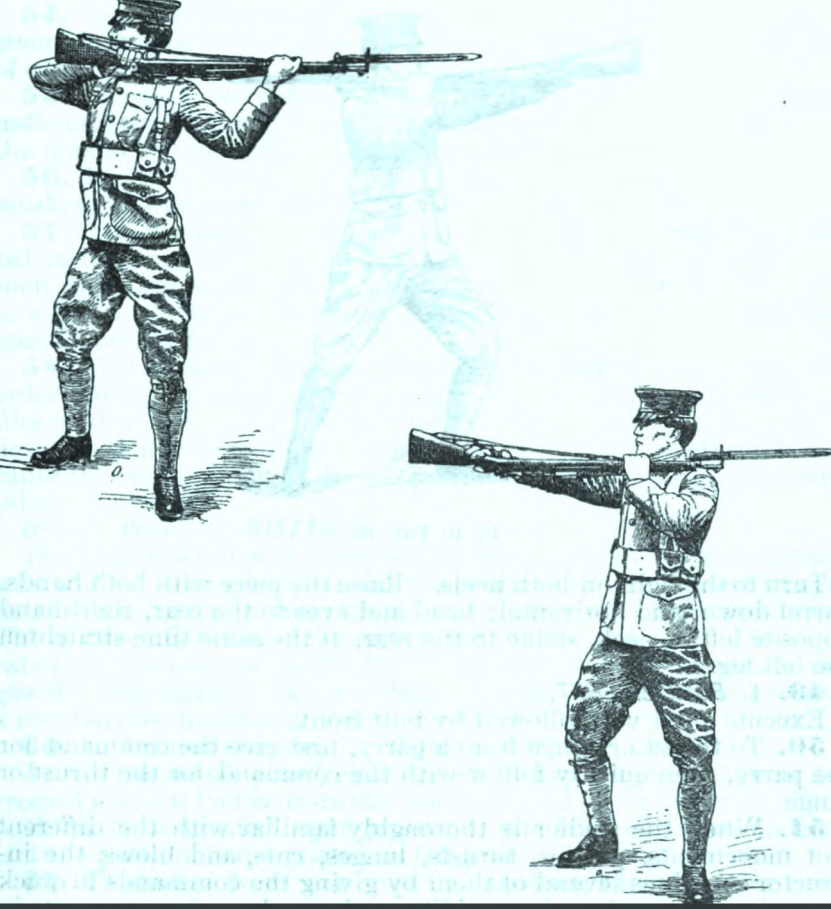

Manual of bayonet exercises, United States Army (provisional) 1907

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MANUAL

OF

BAYONET EXERCISES,

UNITED STATES ARMY,

(PROVISIONAL).

1907.

U.S. - War dept.

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WAR DEPARTMENT,

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OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF.

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WAR DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF,
Washington, November 2, 1906.

The following Provisional Manual of Bayonet Exercises, prepared by a special committee of the General Staff Corps, is issued for the information and guidance of all United States troops. Any suggestions relative to this Provisional Manual which officers believe will add to its value will be submitted to The Military Secretary of the Army before June 30, 1907.

By order of the Secretary of War:

THOMAS H. BARRY,
Brigadier-General, Acting Chief of Staff.

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MANUAL OF BAYONET EXERCISES.

UNITED STATES ARMY.

(Provisional, 1907.)

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1. The infantry soldier relies mainly on fire action to disable the enemy, but he should know that personal combat is often necessary to complete the success and he must therefore be instructed in the use of the bayonet.

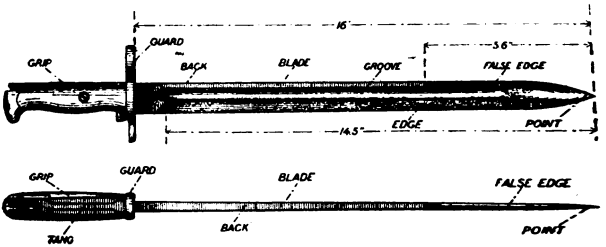
Instruction in the use of the bayonet.

2. The object of this instruction is to teach the soldier how to make effective use of the bayonet in battle; to make him quick and proficient in handling his piece; to give him confidence in the bayonet in offense and defense; to give him an accurate eye, a steady hand, and to increase his muscular development and suppleness.

THE BAYONET.

Nomenclature and description.

3. The bayonet is a cutting and thrusting weapon consisting of three principal parts, viz., the *blade, guard,* and *grip.*



Pls. 1 and 2, Pars. 3 and 4.

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4. The blade has the following parts: Edge, false edge, back, grooves, point and tang. The length of the blade from guard to point is 16 inches. The edge is 14.5 inches, and the false edge 5.6 inches. Length of rifle, bayonet fixed, is 59.4 inches. The weight of the bayonet is 1 pound; weight of rifle without bayonet is 8.69 pounds. The center of gravity of the rifle, with bayonet fixed, is just in front of the rear sight.

5. Officers and specially selected and thoroughly instructed non-commissioned officers will be used as instructors.

DEFINITIONS.

6. ***Distance*** is the term applied to the amount of space separating two combatants.

7. ***Opposition*** results from pressure against the opposing blade, the object being to offer or procure an opening.

8. ***Feints*** are simulated cuts, lunges, or thrusts made with a view of inducing a parry and uncovering the real point of attack. They are single, double, etc., according to the number of movements.

9. The ***return*** is the counter attack, made instantly after or in continuation of a parry.

10. ***The directing line*** is the imaginary line passing through the left heels of the combatants.

11. The instruction is first given to groups of from four to eight men in one line with necessary intervals. In preliminary instruction the position of guard is resumed, by command, after each movement. When the men have become proficient the instructor will cause them to resume guard without command.

12. Instruction is first given on even ground. As the soldier becomes proficient he is taught to handle himself on all kinds of ground and to carefully observe its character. Care is taken that the feet are raised only high enough to clear obstructions.

13. The instructor explains the importance of good foot work and impresses on the men the fact that quickness of foot and suppleness of body are as important for attack and defense as ability to parry and deliver a strong point or cut.

14. Short and frequent drills are preferable to long ones. Care will be taken to prevent wearing the men out by keeping them in one position for too long a time. Frequent rests are necessary.

15. The principles of the commands are the same as given in paragraphs 4, 8, 12, 14, and intervals and distances will be taken

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according to the principles of paragraphs 101 and 102, Infantry Drill Regulations. As soon as the movements are executed accurately the commands are given rapidly, expertness with the bayonet depending chiefly on quickness of motion.

16. The course of instruction is divided as follows:

1. Without the rifle.
2. With the rifle.
3. At will.

I. INSTRUCTION WITHOUT THE RIFLE.

17. These movements are the foundation of the instruction, and should for that reason be thoroughly understood and executed with precision and snap before any others are attempted.

18. The men being in line with four-pace intervals, the instructor commands, 1. ***Bayonet exercise,*** 2. ***GUARD.***

At the command ***guard,*** half face to the right, carry back and place the right foot about twice its length to the rear and about three inches to the right, left foot pointing to the front, the feet forming with each other an angle of about 60°, both knees slightly bent, weight of body held equally on both legs, palms of hands on hips, fingers to the front, thumbs to the rear, head erect, head and eyes straight to the front.

19. To resume the attention, 1. ***Squad,*** 2. ***ATTENTION.*** The men take the position of the soldier and fix their attention.

20. Being at ***guard: Ad-VANCE.***

Advance the left foot quickly about once its length, follow immediately with the right foot for the same distance.

21. ***Re-TIRE.***

Move the right foot quickly to the rear about once its length, follow immediately with the left foot the same distance.

No hard and fast rule can be laid down as to the length of the advance or retire; it depends entirely on circumstances and the distance from the objective.

22. 1. ***Front,*** 2. ***STEP.***

Bring the right heel in line with the left heel and advance the left foot to the position of guard.

23. 1. ***Rear,*** 2. ***STEP.*** Bring the left heel in line with the right heel and retire the right foot to the position of guard.

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24. The front step is used to quickly get within striking distance. It should be used cautiously. The rear step carries the left leg and lower part of the body out of striking distance. The left foot only may be drawn back to avoid an attack and again advanced to position of guard.

25. 1. *Front,* 2. *PASS.*

Place the right foot quickly about once its length in front of the left, advance the left foot to its proper position in front of the right.

26. 1. *Rear,* 2. *PASS.*

Place the left foot quickly about once its length in rear of the right, retire the right foot quickly to its proper position, in rear of left.

The passes are used to quickly get within striking distance or to open a dangerously close distance.

27. 1. *Right,* 2. *TRAVERSE.*

Step to the right with the right foot about once its length and place the left foot in its proper position.

28. 1. *Left,* 2. *TRAVERSE.*

Step to the left with the left foot about once its length and place the right foot in its proper position.

The traverses are used to circle around an enemy, to secure a more favorable line of attack, or to avoid the opponent's attack. Better ground or more favorable light may be gained in this way. Consequently, when facing an opponent the movement is not necessarily at right angles to the directing line.

29. 1. *Right (or left),* 2. *VOLT.*

Face to the right, turning on the ball of the left foot; at the same time carry the right foot quickly to its proper position in rear of the left.

30. Right rear and left rear volts are similarly executed, facing about on the ball of the left foot in each case.

31. *THRUST.*

Straighten the right leg vigorously and throw the weight of the body forward and on the left leg, the ball of the right foot always on the ground.

32. *LUNGE.*

Executed the same as the thrust, except that the left foot is carried forward about once and a half its length. The left heel must always be in rear of the left knee.

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II. *INSTRUCTION WITH THE RIFLE.*

33. The commands for and the execution of the foot movements are the same as already given for movements without the rifle.

34. The men being in line at intervals of four paces, with bayonets fixed, the instructor commands:

1. ***Bayonet exercise,*** 2. ***GUARD.***

Pl. 3, Par. 34.

At the second command take the position of guard (see par. 18); at the same time throw the piece smartly to the front, grasp the rifle with the left hand just above the lower band, left arm nearly extended, elbow down, barrel to the left, blade flat, the right hand grasping the small of the stock at the height of the waist, elbow free from the body, the stock outside of the forearm, bayonet point the height of the chin, eyes on the bayonet point. Both hands grasp the rifle firmly, but without straining.

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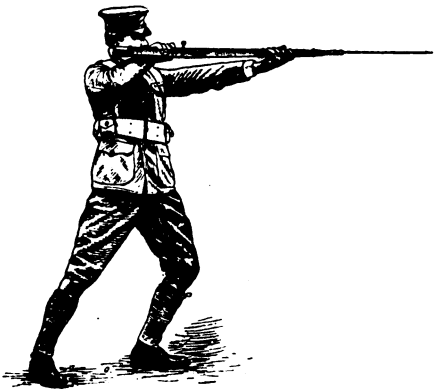
35. 1. ***Order,*** 2. ***ARMS.***

Bring the right foot up to the left foot and resume the position of attention, at the same time bringing the rifle to the position of order arms.

36. 1. ***THRUST.***



Pl. 4, Par. 36.

As in paragraph 31, at the same time drive the piece forcibly to the front with the right arm, barrel to the left. Butt at the height of the chin and outside right forearm. Both hands supporting the piece. Point of bayonet at height of point attacked.

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37. *LUNGE.*

Pl. 5, Par. 37.

Executed as in paragraphs 32 and 36.
Do not overthrust or overlunge, but keep the body under control.

38. 1. ***Right*** (***or left***), 2. ***PARRY.***
Keeping the right hand in the guard position move the piece sharply to the right with the left arm so that the bayonet point is about six inches to the right, checking the rifle on completion of the parry and bringing it back instantly to the position of guard. This parry covers the right side.

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39. 1. *Right low (or left low)*, 2. *PARRY.*

Pl. 6, Par. 39.

Extend the left arm and carry the point of the bayonet down until it is at the height of the right knee, moving the point of the bayonet sufficiently to the right to keep the opponent's attack clear of the point attacked. The low parries are rarely used, as an attack below the waist leaves the head and body exposed.

40. Parries must not be too wide or sweeping, but sharp, short motions finished with a jerk or quick catch.

41. The guard, parries, lunges, or thrusts can be executed to the right, left or rear by means of the volts. In executing the volts make a strong sweep with the rifle; but if there is danger of wounding a comrade the piece should be first brought to a vertical position.

42. *1. Right (or left), 2. CUT.*

Draw the bayonet slightly to the left and with a quick extension of the arms execute a cut to the right, directing the edge toward the point attacked. The cuts are especially useful against the hands or arms of an enemy. In executing left cut remember that the false,

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or back edge, is only 5.6 inches long. The cuts can also be executed in connection with thrusts and lunges.

43. The guard against cavalry is similar to the guard prescribed in paragraph 34, except that the knees are almost straight and the point of the bayonet is higher.

44. The parries, thursts, and lunges against cavalry are executed as previously explained, except that the attack and defense are higher.

45. The following are useful when fighting at close quarters and it is impossible to use the whole piece to advantage.

46. 1. ***Butt***, 2. ***FRONT***.

Pl. 7., Par. 46.

Raise the piece nearly vertical and bring it back, barrel in hollow of the right shoulder, straighten right leg, and bring the butt up with a strong sweep.

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47. 1. ***Butt***, 2. ***RIGHT.***

Pls. 8 and 9, Par. 47.

Raise the piece with both hands, barrel down and horizontal, point of bayonet to the left, head and eyes to the right, right hand opposite left of neck; strike to the right.

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48. 1. ***Butt,*** 2. ***REAR.***

Pl. 10, Par. 48.

Turn to the right on both heels. Raise the piece with both hands, barrel down, and horizontal; head and eyes to the rear, right hand opposite left of neck, strike to the rear, at the same time straighten the left leg.

49. 1. ***Butt,*** 2. ***LEFT.***

Execute a left volt followed by butt front.

50. To thrust or lunge from a parry, first give the command for the parry, then quickly follow with the command for the thrust or lunge.

51. When the soldier is thoroughly familiar with the different foot movements, parries, thrusts, lunges, cuts, and blows, the instructor combines several of them by giving the commands in quick succession, increasing the rapidity and number of movements in combination as the men become more skillful.

52. During preliminary instruction attack and defense will be executed from guard until proficiency is attained, when they can be practiced from ***any*** position.

53. Good judgment of distance is essential. This will be taught

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by practicing the various thrusts, lunges, and blows, in combination with the foot movements, at a mark or dummy.

54. In order that intelligent instruction in the assault can be given, it is necessary to give preliminary instruction in the methods of combining the various thrusts, lunges, returns, feints, etc.

55. Bayonet exercises in two lines consist principally of combinations of thrusts, parries, and leg movements executed at command, the opponent replying with suitable parries and returns.

56. For this instruction each company is furnished with fencing muskets, masks, plastrons, right and left hand gloves.

57. The instructor will inspect the entire fencing equipment before the exercises begin and assure himself that everything is in such condition as will prevent accidents. Special care will be taken to see that the bayonet points are properly protected and that the masks and plastrons are safe.

58. The men, equipped as above, are formed in two lines at the order, facing each other, with intervals of about 4 paces between files and a distance of about 2 paces between lines. One line is designated number 1; the other, number 2. The instructor will cause the corresponding files to take position exactly opposite each other.

59. 1. *Prove*, 2. *DISTANCE.*

The numbers one will thrust slowly at the breasts of numbers two, who will retire or advance until the points of their opponent's bayonets are about 9 inches from their breasts. The order is then resumed. The distance between opponents is very important, as it is complicated by the position of the left hand and arm in the attack and guard. The safest working distance is with bayonets engaged and a constant readiness to advance or retreat.

60. 1. *Bayonet exercise*, 2. *Right (or left)*, 3. *GUARD.*

At the command *guard*, executed as in Par. 34, the bayonets are crossed about 6 inches from the point, the edges in contact. This position is designated *right guard.* If the false edges are in contact the position is designated as *left guard.*

61. To change from one guard to another, the instructor commands:

1. *Number 1 (or 2)*, 2. *Right (or left)*, 3. *GUARD.*

The number designated lowers his point quickly until it clears his adversary's bayonet and then raises smartly on the opposite side.

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62. 1. ***Number 1 (or 2)***, 2. ***Double***, 3. ***GUARD.***
The number designated changes from one guard to the other and quickly resumes the original guard.

63. If the opponent's point is low the bayonet may be passed over his point to prevent lowering your own point too much out of line.

64. The instructor explains that the attacking line must try to hit with the particular attack ordered; the defending line to parry and return the attack, if possible.

65. If the attack is to be directed between the head and hips it will be designated ***right or left high thrust, lunge, or cut,*** according to the direction of the attack. If the attack is to be directed below the hips it will be designated ***right or left low,*** according to its direction. The parries are designated accordingly.

66. After some practice with right, left, and double guard, the following exercises will be given and varied as the instructor directs:

1. ***Number one***, 2, { ***Right High Thrust, Lunge, or Cut,*** / ***Left High Thrust, Lunge, or Cut,*** / ***Right Low Thrust, Lunge, or Cut,*** / ***Left Low Thrust, Lunge, or Cut,*** } 3. ***ASSAULT.***

Number one executes the thrust or lunge or cut, and number two parries; conversely, at command, number two thrusts, lunges, or cuts and number one parries.

67. In order to draw the adversary out and induce him to expose that part of the body at which the attack is to be made, it is advisable to simulate an attack by a feint and then make the real attack by the shortest possible movement. The instructor may command 1. ***Number one,*** 2. ***Feint Right High Thrust, or Cut,*** 3. ***Left High Lunge, Thrust, or Cut,*** 4. ***ASSAULT.***

Number one executes the feint and then the attack. Number two executes both parries.

68. In double feints first one part of the body and then another is threatened and a third attacked. No great force is put in a feint in order that the attack may be quickly changed. An opening may be offered or procured by opposition.

Returns.

69. At this stage the instructor will introduce combinations involving the return or counter-attack. With beginners all movements will be explained to the extent deemed necessary and then executed at the command ***assault.***

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70. Return attacks should be frequently practiced, as they are difficult to parry and the opponent is within easier reach and more exposed. The return can be made a continuation of the parry, and there is no previous warning of its delivery, although it should always be expected. Returns are made without lunging if the adversary can be reached.

71. Commencing with simple combinations the instruction will progress to the more complicated; for example:

1. ***Number one,*** 2. ***Right High Lunge, Thrust, or Cut,*** 3. ***Number two,*** 4. ***Return Left High Lunge, Thrust, or Cut,*** 5. ***ASSAULT.***

Number one executes the attack ordered, number two parries and immediately returns the attack ordered, both numbers resume guard. In these exercises the endeavor is made to deliver the return before the one making the attack can recover from the attack and parry the return.

72. When the men have become thoroughly familiar with the various foot movements, parries, guards, attacks, feints, etc., the instructor combines several of them and gives the commands in quick succession, increasing the rapidity and number of movements as the men become more skillful. Opponents will be frequently changed.

73. When the different combinations are executed with sufficient skill, the instructor will devise courses at arms to be memorized and executed at the command *assault.* The accuracy and celerity of the movements will be carefully watched by the instructor, with a view to correction of faulty execution.

74. It is not the intention to restrict the number of movements, but to leave to the discretion of company commanders and the ingenuity of instructors the selection of such other exercises as accord with the object of the drill.

At will.

75. Satisfactory progress having been made, the instructor will proceed to the exercises at will, by which is meant assaults between two men, each endeavoring to hit the other and to avoid being hit himself. This object will generally be best accomplished by performing the various movements in the manner prescribed.

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76. The instructor can supervise only one pair of combatants at a time. Frequent changes should be made so that the men may learn from each other. A strong and skillful opponent will inspire caution, whereas with a weaker one more vigorous action will be possible, and the recognized superiority will impart coolness and confidence.

77. The assault should simulate as closely as practicable the conditions of actual combat, and should be entered into with caution, the guard being assumed before the adversary comes within reach.

78. The contest should begin with simple, careful movements, with a view to forming a correct opinion of the adversary; afterwards everything will depend on quick perception of the adversary's intentions, coolness, and rapid and correct execution of the movements.

Continual retreat from the adversary's attack and frequent dodging to escape attacks should be avoided.

79. The combat must not begin until the instructor commands *assault,* after which either party has the right to attack. To stop the contest the instructor will command ***HALT,*** at which the combatants will immediately come to the order and then remove their masks.

80. The instructor will closely observe the contest and decide doubtful points. He will at once stop the assault upon the slightest indication of temper. After conclusion of the combat he will comment on the action of both parties, point out errors and deficiencies, and explain how they may be avoided in future.

Rules for exercises at will.

81. When it is necessary to stop the contest—for example, because of breaking of weapons or displacement of means of protection—take the position of the order.

b. After receiving a fair hit a return is not permitted.

c. Do not attack until the adversary is ready and in condition to defend himself.

d. Upon receiving a hit call out "hit"; grazing hits do not count, except with the edge or false edge. No hit counts unless, in the opinion of the instructor, it had sufficient force to disable.

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Hints for instructors.

82. All the prescribed movements, both simple and in combination, must be executed with the greatest precision.

83. The influence of the instructor is great. He must be master of his weapon, not only to show the various movements, but also to lead in the exercises at will. He should stimulate the zeal of the men and arouse pleasure in the work.

84. The character of each man, his bodily conformation, and his degree of skill must always be taken into account. When the instructor is demonstrating the combinations, feints, returns, and parries the rapidity of his attack should be regulated by the skill of the pupil and no more force than is necessary should be used. If the pupil exposes himself too much in the feints and parries the instructor will, by an attack, convince him of his error; but if these returns be too swiftly or too strongly made the pupil will become too cautious and the precision of his attack will be impaired. The object is to teach the pupil not to give exhibitions of superior skill

85. Occasionally the instructor should leave himself uncovered and fail to parry, in order to teach the pupil to take quick advantage of such opportunities.

PRACTICAL BAYONET FIGHTING.

86. When engaging in an assault, first study the adversary's position and proceed by false attacks, executed with speed, to discover, if possible, his instinctive parries. These false attacks should be given the appearance of real attacks, without, however, coming within reach of the opponent's bayonet.

87. When confronted by one who rushes, it is best to retreat until he is under the impression that that is your defense, then wait for the next rush and pin him at the very beginning.

88. Aim at the most exposed part of the body, his left arm, and if that can not be reached by a direct attack, endeavor to mislead him by making a distinct feint at some part of the body, the parry for which exposes the arm, and then cut at the arm with the true or false edge of the bayonet.

89. Deliver your attacks promptly and keep your body well covered. Always maintain a firm opposition and keep your own line of attack well covered.

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90. Endeavor to overcome the tendency of making a return without knowing where it will hit. Making returns blindly is a bad habit and leads to instinctive returns—that is, habitually returning with certain attacks from certain parries—a condition which the skilled opponent will not be long in discovering.

91. In the position of guard the left hand and arm are more or less exposed to attack. If the bayonet of an opponent is also a cutting weapon, the left hand and arm are particularly exposed, and if attacked should be quickly shifted toward the trigger guard, supporting the piece until the guard can be resumed, or the rifle can be withdrawn sufficiently to avoid the attack. Constantly watch for a chance to attack the opponent's left hand. His position will not differ materially from the position of *guard*. If his bayonet is pointed only, he will be at a great disadvantage. Observe the ground and its obstructions. As soon as your opponent is on guard watch his bayonet and piece. Thrust and lunge home. Never draw back the piece preparatory to attacking.

92. The butt is used for close and sudden attacks when it is impracticable to use the bayonet. From the position of port arms a sentry can strike a severe blow with the butt of the piece.

93. It will seldom be possible to hit an experienced opponent by direct attack, and results will more likely be secured by a deception or counter attack. The weight and balance of a rifle with fixed bayonet are such that complicated and intricate movements can not be successfully attempted. ***The point of the bayonet should always be kept as nearly in the line of attack as possible.*** Cuts with the bayonet can be made very strong, and their use in feints and returns will necessitate parrying on the part of an opponent. It is sometimes possible to press an opponent's piece to one side and make a direct attack. If the opponent uses a system of defense in which the hand grips are insecure or the point moved much out of line, it is not difficult to hit him by a feint or a return or even knock his piece from his hands. After an attack has been made resume the guard as quickly as possible, whether a hit has been made or not. If the opponent's point is low or far out of line, an attack at the head or face is possible and very effective.

94. Always be prepared for feints and returns. Do not overparry or parry too soon. Use parries as much as possible when attacked, but always be ready to retreat if necessary. Against a man on foot with a sword be careful that the muzzle of your piece is not grasped. All the swordsman's energies will be directed

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toward getting inside the bayonet. Attack him frequently with short, stabbing thrusts, being careful to keep him at a distance at all costs.

95. In fighting a mounted man armed with a sword every effort must be made to get on his near or left side, because here his reach is much shorter and his parries weaker. If you can not disable the enemy, attack his horse and then renew your attack on the horseman.

96. To sum up: Keep cool; study your adversary and try to discover his game; watch for opportunities and make instant use of them. If you know the adversary's game, take advantage of it; if not, try to make him play yours.

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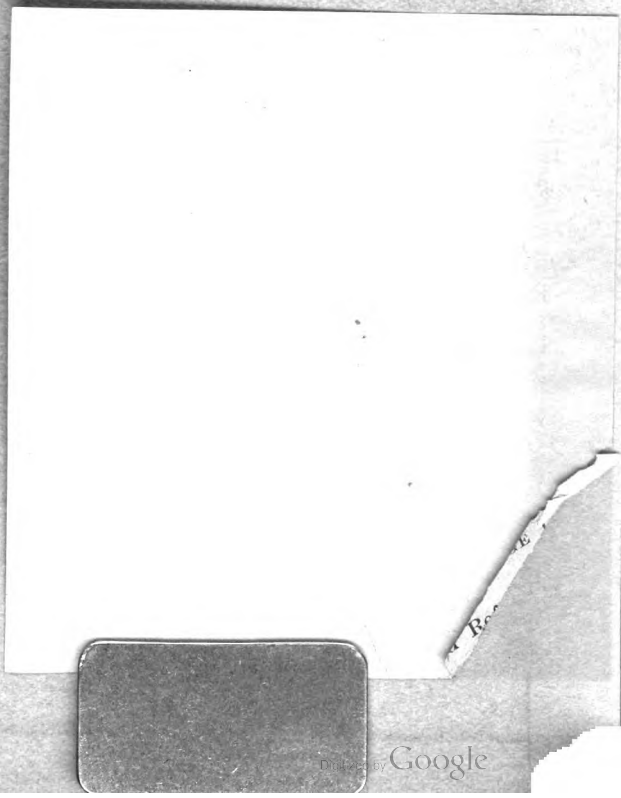

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